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Application No.: 09/647748Case No.: 54030US008

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**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A paper backing for supporting a secondary layer, said backing having a double-layer paper structure comprising a first paper layer and a second paper layer, ~~said first paper layer and said second paper layer each being manufactured from wood pulp and short fibers, and~~

said second layer being manufactured from wood pulp and, optionally, short fibers, the short fibers having a length within the range of about 3 to 20 mm and the short fibers comprising a material selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl alcohol, polyamide, polyester, polyethylene, polypropylene, polyurethane, polyvinyl chloride, polyvinylidene chloride, polyacrylonitrile, rayon, and combinations thereof, wherein said first layer has a blend ratio of short fibers to wood pulp larger than the blend ratio of short fibers to pulp in the second layer.

2. (Currently Amended) An adhesive sheet comprising a paper backing and an adhesive layer provided on one of its surfaces, said paper backing having a double-layer paper structure comprising a first paper layer and a second paper layer, in which

~~said first paper layer and said second paper layer each is manufactured from wood pulp and short fibers, and~~

said second paper layer is manufactured from wood pulp and, optionally, short fibers, the short fibers having a length within the range of about 3 to 20 mm and the short fibers comprising a material selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl alcohol, polyamide, polyester, polyethylene, polypropylene, polyurethane, polyvinyl chloride, polyvinylidene chloride, polyacrylonitrile, rayon, and combinations thereof, and said adhesive layer being provided on the surface of said first paper layer having a blend ratio of short fibers to wood pulp that is larger than the blend ratio of short fibers to wood pulp of said second paper layer.

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3. (Original) An adhesive sheet as set forth in claim 2 wherein said paper backing, in addition to rubber and/or synthetic resin impregnated throughout its entirety, has a top coating layer on the surface of said second paper layer located on the opposite side of said first paper layer.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) A method of masking a surface comprising placing the adhesive sheet of claim 3 on the surface.

6. (Canceled)

7. (New) The adhesive sheet of claim 2, wherein an average of the blend ratios of short fibers to wood pulp in said first and second layers is at least 5% by weight.

8. (New) The adhesive sheet of claim 2, wherein said second paper layer is manufactured from wood pulp and short fibers.

9. (New) The adhesive sheet of claim 8, wherein an average of the blend ratios of short fibers to wood pulp in said first and second layers is at least 5% by weight.